

### NUMBERS

#### Lesson 13 - Chapter 11 Continued

Last time, in Numbers 11, we ended with a very curious circumstance that is easy to just read over, and miss. It concerns the matter that God is going to anoint 70 elders of Israel with the SAME spirit....the same Ruach HaKodesh..... that is upon Moses. The reason for doing this is that Moses needs help in leading these Israelite tribes.....because the weight of responsibility upon just one man is too great. Yet, key to these 70 men being useful in leading God's people, is that they must be as of the same spirit as Moses. What is so curious is that the text plainly means that the spirit must be drawn FROM that which upon Moses in order that it be distributed among the 70 proposed leaders.

Look with me as we re-read Numbers chapter 11:16-17.

#### READ NUMBERS 11:16-17

What exactly does it mean that God is going to draw upon the spirit.....or TAKE some of the spirit....from Moses and put it on these 70 elders? We lightly touched on that last week and I'd like to begin this week by discussing this a bit further. At the least, this means that Moses and these 70 are going to share the same spirit....the same Holy Spirit. This concept should be familiar to us because possessing the SAME spirit is precisely what the New Testament tells us is the point of unity among all Believers.

#### **NAS Ephesians 4:1**

***I, therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, entreat you to walk in a manner worthy of the calling with which you have been called, 2 with all humility and gentleness, with patience, showing forbearance to one another in love, 3 being diligent to preserve the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. 4 There is one body and one Spirit, just as also you were called in one hope of your calling; 5 one Lord, one faith, one baptism, 6 one God and Father of all who is over all and through all and in all.***

So this gives us yet another example that the NT is simply the Torah brought forward with the context of Jesus as Messiah added to the mix.

Yet, we cannot get around the fact that the words of Torah, in their Hebrew context, point out that whatever the nature of this Spirit is that is going to be laid upon the 70 men is, apparently it is going to have to be taken from Moses; even the Rabbis and Sages of old see that Moses is some kind of container of the Holy Spirit, on earth, at this moment in history. And, that the Spirit is going to have to be drawn from Moses SO THAT it can be shared among those 70.

As strange as that may seem in some ways, upon closer examination we have this concept of the Spirit, the Ruach HaKodesh, being drawn from SOMEBODY for the purpose of being placed into others, brought forward in none other than Jesus Christ.

### READ JOHN 16:1-15

Now, if we were studying the NT, and not Torah, we'd probably camp in John 16 for a couple of weeks because so much theology is presented here. But, what I'd like to draw your attention to for today is the comment that until Christ leaves The Comforter cannot come to the disciples of Yeshua. And, The Comforter is clearly identified as "the Spirit". So, Jesus is saying that until He goes, the Holy Spirit cannot be made available to others.

But, for me, that leaves a rather major question just hanging in the air: WHY can't the Spirit be available to others until Yeshua is no longer on earth? Well, if we accept that God's principles and patterns and methods of operation NEVER change, the solution is that as it was with Moses in Torah, so it was for Christ. It appears that like Moses was the sole person upon whom the Holy Spirit rested for a time in the Torah era, so Yeshua was the sole repository of the Holy Spirit during His era of ministry. A difference that SEEMS to be so, but is very hazy and difficult to actually ferret out of the holy texts and then draw a contrast between them, is the matter of the Holy Spirit UPON Moses, but apparently WITHIN Yeshua. That difference is spoken of at length in the modern church as a demonstration of the difference in function of the Spirit in the Old versus New Testament; but in an honest reading there is nothing that actually says, 'the Spirit used to be upon us but now it is in us', or something quite that definitive. It could well be that there is very little difference intended and is only a matter of semantics between the Old Testament Hebrew culture of several hundred years BC and the New Testament Hebrew culture of Paul's day, or it could be all the difference in the world as is traditional in Christianity. But, in both cases, a time came when Yehoveh determined it was necessary to share the spirit among more than only His Mediators.

The verses of Numbers 11 say that the Spirit had to be drawn from Moses; how that occurred we're not told. For Jesus, it was less a matter that the spirit be drawn from Him, than He had **to give it up** in order that it was shared. Because, indeed we're told that when He died, He shouted and "yielded up His spirit". He died. His spirit...the Holy Spirit.....left Him. Which of course is what Christ said in John 16 was the necessary step toward ordinary men (albeit ONLY His Believers) being able to share in that same spirit that was first given to Yeshua when He was baptized by His cousin John.....that spirit that was seen descending upon Him like a dove.

The thing is, here in Numbers 11, we find that even though Moses will have that Holy Spirit that was upon him, and him alone, for a time, now drawn upon and shared among 70 others, that Spirit is not some how divided up.....it's substance and whole-ness is not diminished or depleted in any way just because many will have it. And, I'm pretty sure none of you have a problem with that concept, because that's generally how we of the Church view the Holy Spirit; that although we all share it, we don't each hold a small PIECE.....a diminished piece..... of the Spirit within us.

I'm pointing this out to you because of a very basic teaching of the Church that I'm standing here today to tell you is misguided and simply error; and that teaching is that the spirit of God was not shared among men until Christ came and then went. We find right here in Numbers that the Spirit of God was shared among 71 individuals 1300 years before Yeshua was born. So, the entire premise of the Holy Spirit being shared among many men simultaneously is a Torah principle, not some brand new NT principle.

And, part and parcel with the matter of the sharing of the Holy Spirit among men is the erroneous Christian belief that at the beginning of the Gospel of John, mankind is given a whole new revelation that was never before known to men. In fact, John 1 is often considered the basis for a whole new religion, or theology at least, called Christianity. Let me read the first 5 verses of John 1 to you: they will be familiar.

***NAS John 1:1 In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. 2 He was in the beginning with God. 3 All things came into being by Him, and apart from Him nothing came into being that has come into being. 4 In Him was life, and the life was the light of men. 5 And the light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not comprehend it.***

Now, pay attention, please: the idea that the Word (made incarnate in Jesus) was with God, and is God, did **not** begin with the Apostle John. John was simply stating a well-worn Jewish principle that though not accepted by all Jews was mainstream and widespread among the Jews. The idea of an entity called the Word that was in existence from the beginning did not begin with the advent of Christ on earth and the subsequent inspired writings of the Apostle Johan. When we go back and look at ancient Hebrew writings well before the time of Yeshua, we will find Rabbis and Sages debating and scratching their heads over the very same things we still do: Is God ONE, or is He Two? Is the Word God, or is the Word ANOTHER God? Is the Word an attribute of God, or is He a separate person who is subservient TO God? Eventually, several hundred years after Christ's death, gentile Christians decided that God wasn't only Two, He was Three.....the doctrine of the Trinity.....Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

I'm not here to dispute or debate any of those doctrines. I'm here to tell you that the concept was not a new invention; LONG before Jesus, the Jews identified a divine being or attribute of God known as The Word. In Hebrew the Word is called Memra. In Greek, the Logos. So, for those of you scholars out there, Logos and Memra is the same thing, just different languages, and it is what we today translate in English as "The Word".

The thing I want you to take with you is this: many doctrines that the gentile Church has attempted to put forward to make belief in Yeshua as totally DIFFERENT and apart from true biblical Judaism.....with the historically well documented intent of separating Jews from Christians.... are simply not true. The main thing that separates Christianity and Judaism is WHO the Word is, not if He exists. The differences between us are about WHO the Messiah is, and has he already come, not if there is to be a Messiah.

The Jews also believed in the Holy Spirit, and that it can be laid upon men and shared among men.....and thought this long before Joseph and Mary came onto the scene. We read of it

here in Numbers. And, the Hebrews of old hotly debated the problem of how to think about a God that is ONE, Echad, yet He is manifested in more than one way; the Word, the Memra, being one of those ways, and the Holy Spirit, the Ruach, another. And, even another manifestation of Yehoveh that is mostly absent from the Western Church, and so rarely discussed (though alive and well in many Eastern Christian denominations), is the manifestation of Wisdom, called Sophia. Yes, this is Biblical. These topics about who God was, and was He one or many, and what His essence amounted to, were not the source of new arguments set forth by this new Christian religion. It was only treated as new because the gentiles who quickly became the ruling elite of this new religion, Christianity, distanced themselves from the Jewish people and from long established Jewish scholarship. Goodness, they even distanced themselves from those scores of thousands of Jewish brothers who DID accept Yeshua as the Messiah.

So, if I can accomplish anything in Torah Class, I hope it is to demonstrate that the manmade designations and divisions of Old and New Testaments are a terrible, artificial thing that has served to do nothing but divide God's people. The Old Testament for the Jews, the New Testament for the gentiles. In reality, the book of Matthew should have been simply the next book following Ezra, in the same way that Exodus is but the next book after Genesis; unfortunately Matthew is virtually seen by Jews and Christians alike as the first book of a whole new Bible, separate from the previous. The Hebrew Bible, the Tanach, what we call the Old Testament, is like the blueprints for a house. What we have labeled the New Testament is like the house itself. No doubt we can move into that house, and enjoy it as is. But, if we want to understand what materials were used to build the house, where the electrical wires run, where the pipes are located, how the foundation was built, what's inside those walls, we have to have the blueprints.

As Believers, we're called to be much more than occupiers of the house. We're to strive to understand all there is that can be known ABOUT the house.

Once we can understand and accept that the Bible is an undivided whole, then we can apply the patterns and principles of Torah to the Gospels and Epistles.....as it was meant to be..... and have a much better understanding of their meaning and how to apply it to our lives.

Let's move on, and read verses 18 to the end of the chapter.

### **RE-READ NUMBERS 11:18-35**

OK. The first of the two gripes that the people brought to Moses, and then Moses brought to God, was solved. It wasn't solved the way Moses thought it should, but it was solved nonetheless. Moses thought that God Himself should take on the burden of these ill-tempered Israelites; God said 'I have a better idea. I'm going to give the same spirit I gave to you, to 70 other men, and you, Moses, together with them shall carry the burden'.

The second gripe is that the people wanted meat. They were tired of eating Manna. And, the Lord.....righteously provoked...responds, 'you want meat? I'll give you meat. So much meat it'll make you vomit. In fact, the unbelievable amount of meat that the Lord is somehow going to

provide them will not be the blessing they had hoped for, but a curse.

However, as a preparation for receiving the meat the people are told to sanctify themselves. Being sanctified is a necessary requirement to get prepared for, and be in, Yehoveh's presence. The Hebrew word used is **Hitkaddesh**, and it is the physical act of both bathing one's body AND washing one's clothing. Once this happens all the rules of ritual purity apply meaning that if one touches a dead body they lose that necessary purity. No sexual intercourse would be allowed until after the event for which the sanctification process was ordered was complete; otherwise the purity was defiled. We're going to find this term of "sanctify yourself" in a number of forms in the Old Testament, and one very memorable one is when the Israelites are camping on the eastern bank of the Jordan they are told to **hitkaddesh** in preparation for being led by the Lord into the Promised Land.

Another interesting fact is that this term is ONLY applied to laypeople. This is NOT the term used when priests do ritual bathing; that term is either **rahats** (wash) or **taher** (purify). Here's what we need to take from this: this **hitkaddesh** form of sanctification is something that (while a holy endeavor) is not officiated by a priest or performed by a priest. It is quite literally SELF-sanctification. The thing to notice though is that what this sanctification involves is a purely physical act, the washing of body and garments. Of course it is done in devotion to God. I think we can equate this to the concept of the difference between following the Law for SELF-sanctification that attains a kind of SELF-righteousness versus putting on the blood of Yeshua for a spiritual divine sanctification that attains a kind of God-righteousness that is not physical nor can a man attain it for himself under any circumstance. The thing is that modern Evangelical Christianity says that the latter has replaced the former. I think that is most incorrect; these two types of sanctification (self provided and God provided) are for two different purposes. Obedience to the Law brings a kind of righteousness that is definitely demanded of God and pleasing to Him; but at the same time it cannot and does not bring with it an internal spiritual sanctification that has been performed by the Lord, that we call Salvation.

The spiritual sanctification that can ONLY be apprehended by trust in Yeshua (a work of God) is the ONLY kind of sanctification that saves. Yet, that does not negate the need for a sanctification of our behavior (obedience to the Law) that by definition is a physical matter. It seems to me that this hitkaddesh is a demonstration of this God-principle.

In response to the Lord's concession of providing meat Moses (skeptical as always) responds: how are you going to provide meat, out here in the middle of nowhere, for 600,000 men? Remember the 600,000 number is simply the size of the Israelite army.....men of fighting age. Add to that women and children and feeble and lame and elderly and we likely are nearing 3 million people. And, its not just meat for a day or two, but God says He is going to provide meat for 1 full month!

Now that the Lord has stated how the two problems are going to be resolved, He sets about to accomplish it. The 70 elders are brought to the Wilderness Tabernacle. And, then, in a cloud, it says that Yehoveh descended and "He drew upon the spirit that was upon Moses and put it upon the 70 elders". Even more, when it happened, the 70 began speaking "in ecstasy". Your bibles may say, "prophesied" instead of speaking in ecstasy. My only qualm with using the

word "prophecy" is that for us, today, and really for the remainder of the Bible, prophecy communicates something different than went on here. Here, they were not teaching the Word of the Lord, which is one meaning of the term "prophecy", nor did they speak of the future, another meaning of the term "prophecy". Rather, it was some kind of very excited speech; what it was we don't know. What we DO know is that these 70 did NOT become prophets, and we have no indication of these elders ever being involved with this experience again. In fact, it is specifically stated in verse 25 that whatever ability or meaning there was to this short period of ecstatic speech "did not continue" in these men. The idea of all this is that their strange, excitable speech validated that indeed they had received the spirit of God.

Now, does any of this sound the least bit familiar to you? Was there another time when the Holy Spirit descended upon people and they began speaking in a special way? Sure there was, and most children who have attended Sunday School for any length of time know about it. How about at Pentecost when the Holy Spirit descended and those Jewish Believers who received the spirit started "speaking in other tongues"?

***NAS Acts 2:1 And when the day of Pentecost had come, they were all together in one place. 2 And suddenly there came from heaven a noise like a violent, rushing wind, and it filled the whole house where they were sitting. 3 And there appeared to them tongues as of fire distributing themselves, and they rested on each one of them. 4 And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit was giving them utterance.***

My, my. Once again it seems that the entire concept of the Spirit of God descending upon men, with the result being some special kind of speech as proof, was NOT a brand new NT revelation after all; but rather the repeat of a pattern set down 1300 years earlier, told of in the Torah, here in Numbers 11.

Suddenly, in verse 26, the scene shifts. Two men, Eldad and Medad who were nowhere near the Tabernacle, nor apparently part of the 70 that had been selected, had the spirit of God rest upon them! There is no explanation for this at all. But, what is interesting is that it says they "remained in the camp". Now, what is implied here (and indeed Oral Tradition says this was the case), that often when camping in a place for only short periods of time, perhaps for just a few days, the Wilderness Tabernacle was set up OUTSIDE of the camp, rather than at the center of it. Perhaps it was that it took too long for this enormously long column of people.....which would have spread out for many miles as it traveled.....to finally form up and become a formal camp round about the Tabernacle. So, the Tabernacle was simply set up at some convenient place within the column of Israelites. It is easily imaginable that the beginning of the column was at least one day's journey, and possible two days journey in front of the people who marched at the end of the column.

So, here we get this picture of the Holy Spirit descending upon people (in this case, 2 men) inside the camp of Israel and 70 men **outside** the camp of Israel. The obvious symbolism is that the Holy Spirit was not just intended for the higher classes, or dignitaries. Rather, the Holy Spirit could be bestowed on someone of any class, those who were within the camp of Israel, or even others who were outside of it. God would cross boundaries to give the Holy Spirit to

those He deemed as His. There could be no clearer pattern or message here than what Yehoveh intended to do in times future, with Yeshua as the means and the messenger of this plan that the Holy Spirit would be available to all.

And, fittingly, when it was noticed by the Israelites that Eldad and Medad had received the spirit, some people start yelling, "Moses, some people got God's Spirit but they shouldn't have". Joshua, who would eventually take over for Moses, even pled with Moses to tell Eldad and Medad to stop speaking their ecstatic language because he just couldn't fathom how this could be possible let alone appropriate.

Moses, in the same attitude that our Lord and Master Yeshua would display says, "I wish ALL of the Lord's people were prophets.....I wish Yehoveh would put His Spirit in ALL of them!"

Let's not miss a chance to connect the dots again between this Torah experience and the NT. Listen to Paul in 1Timothy.

***NAS 1 Timothy 2:1 First of all, then, I urge that entreaties and prayers, petitions and thanksgivings, be made on behalf of all men, 2 for kings and all who are in authority, in order that we may lead a tranquil and quiet life in all godliness and dignity. 3 This is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Savior, 4 who desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth.***

Moses, the Savior of Israel, desired that all men would receive the Spirit; Yeshua, God our Savior, desires all men to receive the Spirit (to be saved).

Moses, despite his flaws, was such an exceptional human being. Joshua was all concerned that these two men, Eldad and Medad, who received the spirit completely apart from Moses being in charge of the process, might show up Moses. In fact they were just kind of standing around combing their hair, far away from Moses and the 70 at the Tabernacle, when it happened. Moses had no interest in personal power or in being seen as special. Nor did it matter to him that others were given gifts from the Lord that rivaled even his own. He simply wanted what the Lord wanted for the people, whether he understood it or not. Now THAT is a Godly leader. Is it any wonder that Moses is so greatly revered by the Jewish people to this very day?

Suddenly, a wind starts to blow. It is described in verse 31 as a wind coming from the Lord. And quail...birds.... coming from the direction of the Red Sea begin falling from the sky, widespread, all over the camp. And, note how it says that they fell from "a day's journey on this side, and a day's journey from that side". The idea being, that the marching column of the 3 million Israelites probably stretched a distance of 2 days journey; or, in more modern terms, it was a column of people some 20 miles in length. And, the Lord willed that those quails fall all over that long, spread out column of weary and grumbling Israelites, so that all could partake if they chose.

Now, it wasn't that merely a sufficient amount of quails fell over this 2-days journey distance; it was they fell over this vast area something on the order of 3 feet deep! Hundreds of thousands

of cubic yards of quails.....hundreds of tons of quails....were there for the taking. So, in verse 32, the people began to gather the quail and the LEAST a person gathered was 10 homers of quail.....or, about 50 bushels of quail.

Several Psalms recall this astounding event, so great was its impact on the Hebrew psyche. Listen to Psalm 78: verse 26-32.

***NAS Psalm 78:26 He caused the east wind to blow in the heavens; And by His power He directed the south wind. 27 When He rained meat upon them like the dust, Even winged fowl like the sand of the seas, 28 Then He let them fall in the midst of their camp, Round about their dwellings. 29 So they ate and were well filled; And their desire He gave to them. 30 Before they had satisfied their desire, While their food was in their mouths, 31 The anger of God rose against them, And killed some of their stoutest ones, And subdued the choice men of Israel. 32 In spite of all this they still sinned, And did not believe in His wonderful works.***

Could this event have actually happened? Is there enough quail on all the earth for this to even be a possibility?

Here is what Josephus says NOT about that event, but about the migration of quails as a regular and normal thing across the Arabian and Sinai Peninsulas:

"In March and April they cross the Mediterranean coming from the south in large bands, and returning southwards from Europe in even more enormous flights towards the end of September. On both migrations they are netted for the market; the flesh of the birds caught in the spring is commonly dry and indifferent, but that of those taken in the autumn is excellent. Though they rise rapidly on the wing, they seldom fly far except on their migrations, and then they are often overtaxed and simply drop, exhausted, into the sea or even onto passing ships."

That God would have caused this natural thing that was normally enormous in scope to happen on a Super-natural scale fits within His pattern of operation as we saw in the various plagues He set upon Egypt to liberate His people from Pharaoh.

But, even more this attests to the accuracy of this event when it says the Israelites "spread them out all around the camp". This does not mean that they laid the quails all over the place. Rather, spreading them out mean they plucked them, split them, and spread them open to dry.

It was the common Egyptian method to preserve meat by drying it. They did it with fish, beef, and fowl. In fact, the meat was rarely cooked either before or after it was dried. Once dried, cured, they simply ate it just as it was. And, these Israelites would naturally have followed the Egyptian way for they had been Egyptian for 400 years and knew nothing else.

Then, while they were still eating the quails.....that is, they had yet to run out of this enormous supply....the Lord came against them for their great offense against Him to test Him in such a disrespectful and ungrateful manner. What the plague was that came against them we don't know. But, many died. The place where this happened.....and so the place where these many



killed Israelites were buried.....was named Kibroth-Hataavah. Those Hebrew words mean, "the place of craving".

Rabbis have done a brilliant job of assessing the overall nature of this calamity of God's judgment; and their opinion is fascinating. It is that the people craved flesh. Let me say it another way: they lusted after the flesh. They gorged themselves on flesh. They wanted the flesh so bad God gave them all they wanted. Yehoveh turned them over to the flesh. They preferred flesh to heavenly food, so God gave it to them.

This is neither allegory nor metaphor. This is but the physical demonstration of the spiritual principle that is laid out before us in the person of Yeshua. Do we want to eat of the bread of life, or do we want to gorge ourselves on the ways of the flesh, which leads only to death? God will not force us one way or the other. It is our choice, just as it was the Israelites choice to reject the Manna in favor of the flesh of dead birds.

Once the Israelites buried their dead, they moved on to a place called Hazeroth. The best guess as to the location of Hazeroth is at a place sitting at the top of that finger of the Red Sea called the Gulf of Aqaba; a place that today is called 'Ain el Hadra. This is further indication that almost certainly the Israelites were at this time traveling up along the western end of the Arabian Peninsula until they reached the tip of the Red Sea (the Gulf of Aqaba, at which point the Arabian and Sinai Peninsulas merge. From Hazeroth, their next move would have been west and somewhat north.

We'll take up Numbers chapter 12 next time.